

MINUTES

WORKSHOP 1

CLUSTERS:

AREAS DEVOTED TO COMPANIES AND EMPLOYMENT

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CLUSTERS: AREAS DEVOTED TO COMPANIES AND EMPLOYMENT

After counting mostly on attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and organizing specific host sites to boost their development, countries in the southern Mediterranean are now focusing more on policies that promote innovation. The transformation of industrial parks and technopoles is coupled with new public initiatives to support the creation of clusters, groups within which companies concerned by the same markets gather to grasp new opportunities and improve their competitiveness.

The clustering phenomenon in the three Maghreb countries is a reality that takes different forms depending on the country. Clusters, through the connections that they build, their constant search for innovation, and their opening to the outside, offer a response that matches the requirements of companies and creates employment at the same time.

The momentum that these three countries have been developing for several years could quickly result in the creation of around thirty active, visible clusters in the region.

As an example in Tunisia, the creative process of clusters that started up in the mid-2000s has developed rapidly over the last two years. Although the number of clusters currently equipped with a governing system is still limited, the multiplication of these groups is an encouraging sign.

Clusters are areas that open out to their environment and neighbourhood to pick up on information flows and market signals. Inter-cluster cooperation, which is necessary and sought after, is developing. It can take different forms: institutional, experience sharing, collective projects, and at a more advanced level, it can lead to coproduction.

Important steps to take:

- Accompany transformations in the economies of the Maghreb by creating productive communities in the shape of clusters, which bring deep-seated change.
- Support national authorities and cooperation agencies in their efforts to support the emergence of clusters.
- Stimulate inter-cluster cooperation, particularly between North and South, through cluster networks. France Clusters already plays a decisive role in this networking approach.
- Foster, especially through decentralized cooperation, closer relationships between clusters and local authorities in North and South.

About EMCC

Committed to improving Mediterranean integration, the directors of IPEMED's founding companies set up a vast movement of business leaders, EMCC (Euro-Mediterranean Competitiveness Confederation) in 2009. EMCC speaks in a single voice and campaigns to bring the two sides of the Mediterranean closer together through economics. Instigated by the CEO of GDF-SUEZ Gérard Mestrallet, EMCC is currently chaired by Xavier Beulin, CEO of Sofiprotéol, in his capacity as Chairman of the IPEMED Supervisory Board.

www.emcc-forum.org

About IPEMED

The Economic Foresight Institute for the Mediterranean Region (IPEMED) is an association recognized as in the public interest that aims to bring the two sides of the Mediterranean closer together using economics. Financed by major public and private Mediterranean companies that share its values, as well as territorial authorities, it works to raise awareness of the common future and converging interests of countries in the North, South and East Mediterranean. IPEMED's values are political independence, and parity between North and South in the way it is governed and organizes its work. It puts the emphasis on the economy, fosters an operational approach to its projects, and works for the long term. IPEMED is presided by Radhi Meddeb and directed by its founder, Jean-Louis Guigou.

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